



THE PRISON ISSUE



To our Readers:

Hello again readers,

In your hands (or on your screens) is the Prison Issue of The Student Insurgent. Prisoners make up a considerable portion of our audience, and we decided that we should honor our loyal readers with something of an exposé on the modern US injustice system. We have mailed issues of our fine publication to prisoners free-of-charge for decades, and often receive letters from those incarcerated, a few of which are included in this issue.

We believe that the prison system does not truly serve a beneficial function in society, and therefore we wish to see the complete abolition of such inhumane torture centers in favor of a more equitable system of true justice. To our readers who are not familiar with the crimes of the prison system, just think about it for a second — we lock our fellow human beings in cages, sometimes for the rest of their natural lives. How fucked-up is that?

I remember considering the notion of prison abolition to be somewhat jarring when I first heard it — close down all prisons? And let the “bad guys” run wild?! But no, this mindset is part of society’s narrative which dehumanizes and perpetuates the casual abuse of our fellow man. Aside from the fact that many individuals locked away in prisons are there for completely non-violent “offenses” (such as marijuana or other substance use), the fact is that the way that justice is handled by the prison system is simply not conducive to its purported goal of “corrections.”

The basis of our punitive injustice system is that wrong-doers deserve punishment, and through punishment, future offenses will be deterred. Nothing could be further from the truth. People can change, of course, but they first must be allowed the proper circumstances which enable positive change; they must be shown compassion, not punishment. They must be seen as human beings, first and foremost; not the dehumanized “bad guys” that the media and government portray. Maybe they made bad choices in life, maybe they had very few options to begin with. Very few people are born with a sociopathic desire to harm others; this is a learned behavior from a violent, war-like, patriarchal society — our modern American society. Alternative methods such as Restorative Justice apply different methods which are considerate and respectful of all parties involved in a crime.

And why does crime occur in the first place? Put simply — inequality, wealth disparity, poverty. Resources and wealth are stolen from the poor and working classes, and funneled upwards to those who already possess great fortunes. The members of the wealthy ruling class have always been the biggest criminals in society. “Give a man a gun and he can rob a bank; Give a man a bank and he can rob the world.” The difference is that the wealthy use the power of the state in order to manipulate the laws of the justice system to their own advantage.

In a truly free society, the very thought of locking someone away for years or decades is abhorrent. The “justice” system is little more than a legal form of revenge, and it does not even come close to addressing the root causes of crime or violence. In fact, it merely exacerbates the problem by perpetuating the cycle of violence and abuse. To make matters worse, corporations are incentivized to increase the amount of prisoners because it means more profit, a prime reason why the US has the highest per capita incarceration rate on the fucking planet — this topic is covered in more depth in these pages.

In this issue, we hope to shine a small light of truth on the darkness that is the US prison system. For many of our readers, these topics are all-too-familiar. But for those of us on the outside, and our fellow students at the University of Oregon, we encourage you to seek out further information on the problem of prisons, and hopefully, work with us to create true justice by abolishing all prisons.

In somber solidarity,
Matt



CONTENTS

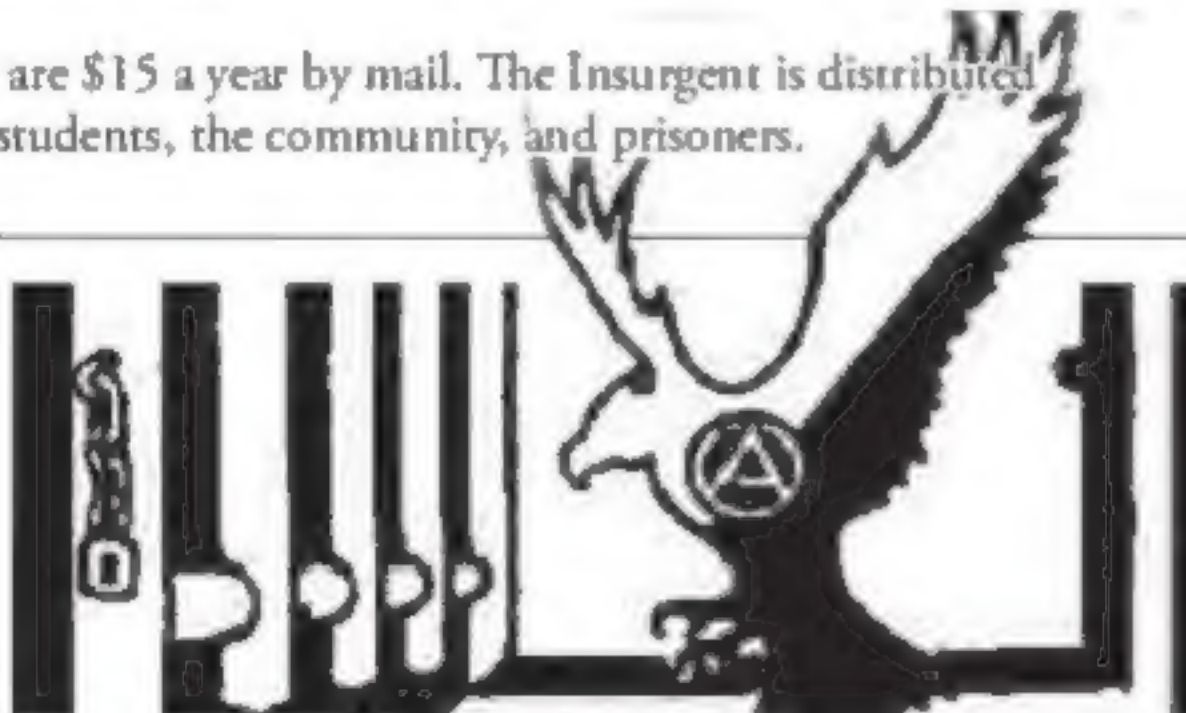
Letters to the Co-Editors	1
Labor, Corporate Interest, and the P-I-C	3
The "Justice" Industry	6
A look at the Jericho Movement in Oregon	7
Reflections on the Inside-Out Program	9
The Reproduction of Prison Inside Our Heads	11
Systematic Torture Inside California Prisons	14
An Overview of the Pelican Bay Hunger Strike	15
The Musings (or Mental Fog) of a Hunger Striker	16
Poetry	17
A Short List of Prisoner Resources	19

The Student Insurgent is based out of the University of Oregon in Eugene. We are a radical publication that seeks to deconstruct the existing social order and facilitate its replacement with one which is ecologically sound and functions on egalitarian lines.

We strive to be an open forum — somewhere the silenced and oppressed can express their ideas and opinions free from the filters of the mainstream media.

Subscriptions are \$15 a year by mail. The Insurgent is distributed freely to UO students, the community, and prisoners.

The Insurgent encourages its readers and supporters to submit news and feature articles, short fiction and poetry, cultural criticism, theory, reviews, etc. Graphics, cartoons, and photos are also more than welcome. If you would like your material to be considered for publication, just e-mail or snail-mail any content you'd like to submit to the address below. We reserve the right to edit any submissions for grammar, clarity, or length. Poetry and art will not be edited or censored in any way. All articles, with the exception of unsigned editorials, solely reflect the opinion of their author and not necessarily that of the Student Insurgent.



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Dear Student Insurgent,

SALUTATIONS BROTHERS and SISTERS

My name is Jimmy Lewis and have been reading your zine for years now. I am also serving time in a max unit in Missouri. Please mind that I have no platform to complain about my current situation for I was a very hostile youth and squandered many opportunities to turn my life around.

The prison system in America is deplorable and needs to be overhauled severely. I surmise that the Missouri Dept. of Corr., like many others, is running out of ways to punish its incarcerated peoples so they create skirmishes(?) around the Constitutional Rights line. Over the years the state level prisons have developed into a cult, in the true sense of the word. They write their own laws, within which concepts like right and wrong have ceased to be relevant. And through these laws they imagine themselves isolated from normal society.

I am in federal court arguing over the constitutional right to be able to communicate with people outside of prison using pen-pal websites.

Any restriction of communication between two persons is a violation of one's constitutional rights. Crazy as it sounds even the Missouri Constitution has a Bill of Rights and in the rights there is section eight (8) -> Freedom of Speech - "... that no laws shall pass impairing the freedom of speech... no matter by what means communicated..."

It's really a shame that myself and many others need to waste a federal court's time in order to retain the so-called given rights of a U.S. citizen, all the while being penalised for standing up for said rights too.

James B Lewis vs. The Missouri Dept. of Corr. et al
2:09-cv-04167-SOW

Thank you for your ears.

Sincerely,
Jimmy Lewis



INMATE MAIL
DEPT OF CORRECTIONS

STATE PRISON
GENERAL MAIL

I was just turned on to Student Insurgent and very much appreciate the fact you cared enough to publish the story about the guy with a bad knee and no money for a knee brace locked up in one of Oregon's prisons. The medical treatment in many institutions in Oregon leave much to be desired, mainly because of budget cuts. Here at Madras, many lawsuits have been filed and you have to practically become immobile to get emergency care.

Although this is considered a minimum security facility because everyone here is under 48 months to release, many of the Corrections Officers — not all, but many — are sadistic, mean, and tend to breed contempt towards inmates about to be released to the streets who are merely going to treat others the way authority treated them.

I am deeply grateful your publication offers a voice to the oppressed and condemned,
Keep up the good work and thank-you!

Respectfully,
Tommy Boggs
12097102
3920 E. Ashwood Rd.
Madras, OR 97741

This was mailed by an inmate
confined at a Washington State
Department of Corrections facility.
It's contents are uncensored.



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
Notification to Publisher of Publication Disapproval

This publication contains material that violates Operating Procedure 803.2, *Incoming Publications*, and could be detrimental to the security and good order of the institution and the rehabilitation of inmates. The numbers for those pages that were reviewed on which violations were found are listed above (unless too numerous) beside the publication containing them.

Oregon Department of Corrections - Inmate Mail

I just came across vol.23 no.1 of the Student Insurgent and I love it! I identify with this movement fully and I support it globally!

I am a prisoner here at Pelican Bay State Prison, housed in the isolation unit, called Security Housing Unit (SHU), for over 2 decades.

July 1, 2011, we initiated a Hunger Strike in protest over this on-going torture, and other California prisons, and even prisons outside of California joined in. We re-initiated our strike on September 26, 2011, and I was transferred to another prison based on my deteriorating health — my first travel outside of the SHU in over 20 years — and I loved it, it was invigorating!

I recently read something by a university professor, reaching out to the students and telling them, "we're all in the same boat," that the failure of these professors to get a fair wage is the reason many students are not finding the classes they're looking for, or the level of education. The professor was explaining that it wasn't a professor vs. student battle but that they were both fighting the same power. I know you agree!

I would have liked to add, that we prisoners are also in that same boat, and that in large part, the reason that those professors are not getting a just wage is because of all the funds being used to build these prisons and pay these prison guards outlandish salaries, so that the "fat cats" on top of this whole prison scam can continue to rake in their profits, give out jobs to their friends, and bring in more people to their already mega-powerful guards' union. We prisoners are also a part of the 99%. We, like the homeless, have historically been singled out by the so-called leaders of our society, and used as punching bags so that they can show the rest of society how tough they are on crime. We can't vote, so we have no political voice; we have no political clout. But we have now found a few of those rare individuals, who have heard our cries, and now with the Occupy Movement, the feeling is in the air that fundamental change is on the way.

As of this writing the Prison system is coming out with a step-program where prisoners will be "theoretically" able to work their way out of SHU. That's a nice thought, but those of us familiar with this system are really not expecting much, and this struggle is far from over. We now have Amnesty International investigating, and one law firm is planning to petition the United Nations on human rights violations, not to mention other suits focused on Constitutional grounds, and legislators drafting bills to severely limit the use of these SHUs.

Still struggling.

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PELICAN BAY S.H.U.
UNIT D-3

State of Michigan
Department of Corrections
PRISONER MAIL

INMATE MAIL
PA DEPT OF
CORRECTIONS

MAILED FROM A STATE
CORRECTIONAL
INSTITUTION

Write to The Student Insurgent!

We can't guarantee that we'll respond to all correspondences, but we really like hearing from our readers all the same. Letters to the co-editors or content for print consideration can be sent to: *The Student Insurgent*, 1228 University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403. If you happen to have internet access, our e-mail address is studentinsurgent@gmail.com. We also mail new issues to prisoners free-of-charge, so go ahead and send us a request to add you to our mailing list, if'n you're so inclined.

Labor, Corporate Interest, and the Rise of the Prison-Industrial-Complex

by Paige Corich-Kleim

Over the past few decades the number of Americans incarcerated has skyrocketed. More than two million people live behind bars in the United States. The US has 5% of the world's general population, yet houses 23% of the world's prison population. Between 1980 and 2000 the prison population quadrupled, but crime dropped. The reasons behind this are mostly profit and fear based, another symptom of our sick capitalistic system.

There has been a shift of "correctional" services from the public sphere to the private, creating a profit-based penal system. Companies are contracted to build and maintain private penitentiaries, and the populations of public prisons are contracted with private companies for their labor. New links have been formed between corporations, government officials, correctional communities and the media. Fear-mongering by corporations and the media have allowed this to happen without anybody taking much notice. The media affects perception of crime, and while crime rates have dropped, local and national news have increased their coverage of violent crimes. If one network reports about a gruesome murder and another doesn't, the viewership of the one that showed violence will rise. The number of viewers mean higher ratings, expensive ad spaces, and more money for the network. The constant presence of violence and crime has gained a high level of normalcy. It is assumed that people will be violent and continue to commit crimes, so the only response is imprisonment and reactive methods. This forces politicians to take "tough on crime" stances as vote guarantees, putting resources into more surveillance, police and technology.

Justice has turned into a business, with corporations and their lobbyists manipulating public policy. Corporations lobby politicians to pass laws that result in an increase of arrests, convictions and mandatory minimum sentences. The same corporations then get governmental contracts to build and run private prisons, or utilize prison labor. According to renowned political activist Angela Davis, the modern prison industry generates "huge profits from processes of social destruction," much like the military-industrial-complex. These sort of demands and changes in priorities are a result of public demand for safety. It is difficult to argue against spending for "public safety," even when investing in education and community building improves quality of life and safety.

"Crime control" and punishment is an industry. It reacts to the fears of the public by working to enforce laws and use punishment when crimes are committed. Reactive measures are emphasized over preventative measures (which are difficult to quantify in terms of effectiveness). When faced with constant bombardment by the media about crimes, most people support increasing expenditures on police surveillance and technology. They feel that it directly affects them. They also support building more prisons when faced with the prospects of overcrowding.

"Justice has turned into a business"

The current justice system does not address the causes of crime; it reacts to it. In the words of David Bland, an engineer with the private corrections corporation Normant Industries, "It's easier for us to build prisons than look at the causes of crime." For-profit companies such as Normant have a vested interest in people getting locked up. The system houses and exploits people, instead of working to correct behaviors and improve society. It commodifies punishment and allows for economic growth through artificial increases in crime. Crime rates are dropping, but simultaneously there has been an increase in mandatory minimum sentences and punishment. Sentences related to nonviolent crimes, especially drug possession, have increased since President Nixon declared a "war on drugs." What used to be a violation that would result in probation or community service now warrants time behind bars, putting strain on government, taxpayers, and communities.

These increases and changes have most drastically affected people of color. Distinctions in prosecution and sentencing have helped reinforce classist and racist policies alike. The prison population is overwhelmingly non-white (67%) and generally from lower-class backgrounds. Incarceration is a "quasi-legal and highly profitable form of slavery." Some states are even trying to alleviate the burden prisons put on taxpayers by relying on inmates to pay for their beds through labor. In practice, this sets up a system of bonded labor slavery, in which debt could lengthen sentences.

The length of incarceration isn't necessarily correlated to recidivism rates (repeat offenders). Instead, it is offender-specific. Most people leave prison with what they had when they started, and recidivism rates remain high in certain areas, especially due to drugs and gang affiliations. These associations are often created within prison walls. Inmates are forced to find a way to fit in and cope with the realities of prison life. Gang affiliations and drugs fill these voids.

More recently, inmates have been sent to more expensive, privately run prisons, where public money gets funneled into new, large-scale projects outside of urban centers. Prisons are built in places where economies are failing in order to stimulate economies by creating jobs. These companies then rake in hundreds of millions of dollars annually by providing health care, phones, food, and other services by maintaining prison facilities. Local economies can be revitalized and built up by building prisons. However, this type of infrastructure and stimulus spending doesn't improve the general well-being of these communities, nor the safety of the country.

Oregon Corrections Enterprise (a private company that works within the public Oregon State Penitentiary facility), mentions their contributions to the community on their website. However, their mission statement and "contributions" section contradict each other. They talk about the benefits for the public sector, private companies, and the skills that inmates get. According to OCE, everybody wins! They fail to mention the jobs that inmates have. 93 jobs for non-prisoners are created in Salem because of the enterprises, and 1,045 inmates are employed. There is a mix of public and private interests, making it difficult for the public to see who is truly benefiting and influencing legislature.

Jobs are outsourced within communities. Thousands of inmates work for meager wages without the right to unionize. Jobs that could otherwise be done by the outside population are moved into prisons because it allows for a substantially larger profit margin. Companies that exploit prison labor don't need to provide living wages or the normal benefits for workers (such as OSHA standards). They are much less accountable for their actions because their workers are convicts and have no way to leverage public sympathy and control. The prison population mirrors many characteristics of the working class that came into existence with the era of industrialization — they are mobile, segmented, and disciplined. The only way they differ is in their ability to be resistant.

Prison populations are mobile. Inmates don't choose which facility they are placed in and they can be transferred to different facilities whenever necessary. If there are industry jobs available at one location, inmates can be transferred in order to satisfy the demand. When there are empty beds in facilities, the prison doesn't get as much money, as they are paid by the state in tax dollars per head. Therefore, there is an incentive to arrest and convict more people to fill beds to receive public funds. It costs about \$20,000 to keep a single inmate in prison for one year.

The population is segmented. Hierarchy doesn't only exist between correctional officers and inmates; the inmates are further divided based on many additional factors. Inmates self-divide depending on race, religion, gang affiliation, drugs, and "paperwork" (convictions). In the "Chow Hall" (cafeteria) these divisions are most visible. Whites have an area, Natives, Pacific Islanders, Blacks and Latinos have their assigned areas to sit. These areas are further divided by gang affiliation. There are also tables where the "lifers" sit, and tables where sex offenders and pedophiles are ostracized. Language can also separate people. Immigrants may speak different languages, creating divisions within the populations who actually have the same interests in mind. Movement within prisons is controlled by the guards and administrators. People can live in the same complex for years and never come in contact with each other because of the blocks they're on. Also, there is little to no communication between prisons, thereby preventing widespread unionization, boycott or protest. Even though inmates vastly outnumber guards, they lack firepower and organization to rise up against the injustices cast against them. As a result, there is no overall sense of solidarity within the prison system.



A female inmate works on an American flag while working in the Prison Industries Authority Fabrics program at the Central California Women's Facility on Thursday, April 5, 2012 in Chowchilla, Calif.
Photo: Lea Suzuki, The Chronicle / SF
Source: Facebook.com/CACorrections

Inmate labor is also extremely disciplined. Inmates have little to no rights, and because of the demand for jobs within the prison system, they can be replaced at any time. Inmates work in hopes of getting "better" jobs that pay little more than \$2 an hour. They generally don't want to complain about conditions because they can be replaced so easily; Even when inmates are making 20 cents an hour, somebody else is sitting in their cell without a job. Inmates often keep the same jobs over long periods of time. They receive training and work to improve if mobility is possible. The money inmates make goes to a number of places. It can be used to purchase canteen goods, buy letter-writing supplies, support their families, pay for legal help, and sometimes to pay for room and board within the prison.

The only characteristic that isn't shared with the original working class is a sense of resistance. People in prisons do not have freedom of expression. They do not have freedom to assemble, the right to bear arms, or freedom from unnecessary search and seizure. Without these basic rights, they have very few prospects of resistance. Inmates are dehumanized within the prison system, and are regularly denied basic respect as human beings. As such, their working conditions and wages are not taken into account when policies are passed. Voting status varies by state, but incarcerated people and most of those on parole don't have a voice. They hold very little influence in public policy and law-making. While there have been prison riots and uprisings, they are generally in response to overcrowding. The only way the state sees to fix this problem is through building more prisons, effectively increasing the prison population and failing to address the real causes of the exploitative, expensive complex itself.

During tough economic times there is an elevated level of competition between corporations. Corners have to be cut to maintain profit margins, forcing them to use and even compete for prison labor. To satisfy the demand for cheap labor in the prisons, more private prisons are built and lobbying groups work to get more numerous, lengthier sentences. The most well-known of these lobbying groups is the American Legislative Exchange Council, or ALEC. Through private funding, this high-profile group has pushed legislature at the state and federal level, such as California's "three strikes" laws and "truth in sentencing," which are designed to increase mandatory minimum sentences. In California, if a person has three felony charges, they will get life in prison, regardless of the extent of the crime. They are then subjected to further exploitation and low living standards. These laws put less control in the hands of judges and prosecutors, theoretically to create a more egalitarian, colorblind sentencing system. The real intent though, as shown by the influences and sponsors of corporate lobbying groups, is to lock up more people for longer sentences in order to exploit

them and generate profit. It also forces many people into plea bargains, meaning that over 90% of those convicted of crimes never even go to trial. This scenario puts the power in the hands of lawyers, allowing for more exploitation of the poor and disenfranchised.

"Prison is not a solution to crime, it's a way to commodify people and exploit their labor."

With the rise of the prison-industrial-complex there has also been a shift away from sending jobs overseas, in favor of simply moving them behind bars. A cheap, less regulated labor force is now available stateside. Chevron uses inmates to input data. IBM, Nike and Wilson Sporting goods have also begun to utilize prison labor. Transportation costs and tariffs are eliminated, streamlining production and providing even greater profit margins for corporations. Daniel Harr argues that these labor practices are not just unethical but that "the transfer of an individual from one place to another for profit and the use of that individual to perform labor that generates revenue for a private individual while paying the person doing the work a wage far below the poverty level constitutes slavery." Prison labor can be compared to sweatshop labor. However, some of the traditional defenses of sweatshop labor cannot be applied to prison labor. In the case of prison labor, people aren't able to build up capital to improve their lives or the lives of their families. It also doesn't contribute to development and improvement of the country as a whole.

Corporations dictate what happens in law and policy in the United States, especially when it comes to the justice system. The power that comes with millions of dollars in lobbying money and campaign finance cannot be denied. Corporations work to privatize the roles that the state has previously held, in order to "improve efficiency." However, efficiency can be looked at in several different ways. If the goal is to house and exploit people, then it has certainly succeeded. Private

prisons can store vast amounts of people, they can make a lot of money for private interests, and they can somewhat help rebuild economies in rural areas. A few jobs are created, and some spending and economic benefits do happen, but the larger negative implications are far more

relevant. If the goal of the justice system is to provide actual justice and build stronger, healthier communities, then privatization has been an utter failure. The system does not look at the causes of the crimes or work to rehabilitate people. If crime were to suddenly stop, there would have to be some way to fill open spots in prisons, and so more offences would have to be criminalized. Prison is not a solution to crime, it's a way to commodify people and exploit their labor. There is no profit motive in a healthy, functioning society.

Crime has decreased, but there seems to be no end to high incarceration rates, as prisons continue to become more overcrowded. According to one BBC report, prisons in the US are currently at 110% capacity. More strain is put on guards, inmates, taxpayers, and politicians. The interests of corporations dominate the justice system through mainstream media and the lobbying of lawmakers and politicians. Instead of looking at rehabilitation programs, people are simply housed in the punitive prison system, isolating them from their communities and failing to provide lasting positive change. Restorative justice and reintegration programs have not been adopted consistently at any level in the US justice system, even though these programs have proven to be more influential in reducing recidivism rates and improving overall quality of life. As long as punishment is used for profit, we will continue to sink public resources into exploitative practices and live in fear.

The “Justice” Industry

by Thomas Walker

Should someone be profiting from the construction of prisons, or the exploitation of prisoners? As long as somebody is making money, our “Justice” system cannot be just. Prison profiteers pay lobbyists, and lobbyists push legislation and reform, causing more and more folks to be incarcerated. Bodies and energy are stolen from their homes and communities, and labor/wages are undercut by the immense underpayment of prison labor. Entire populations, identified as “surplus,” are warehoused -- treated as, and shown to be, expendable in their isolation from the never-ceasing life on the outside. Their labor, cheaper than any other labor force in the United States and in many other countries of the world, is exploited for profit.

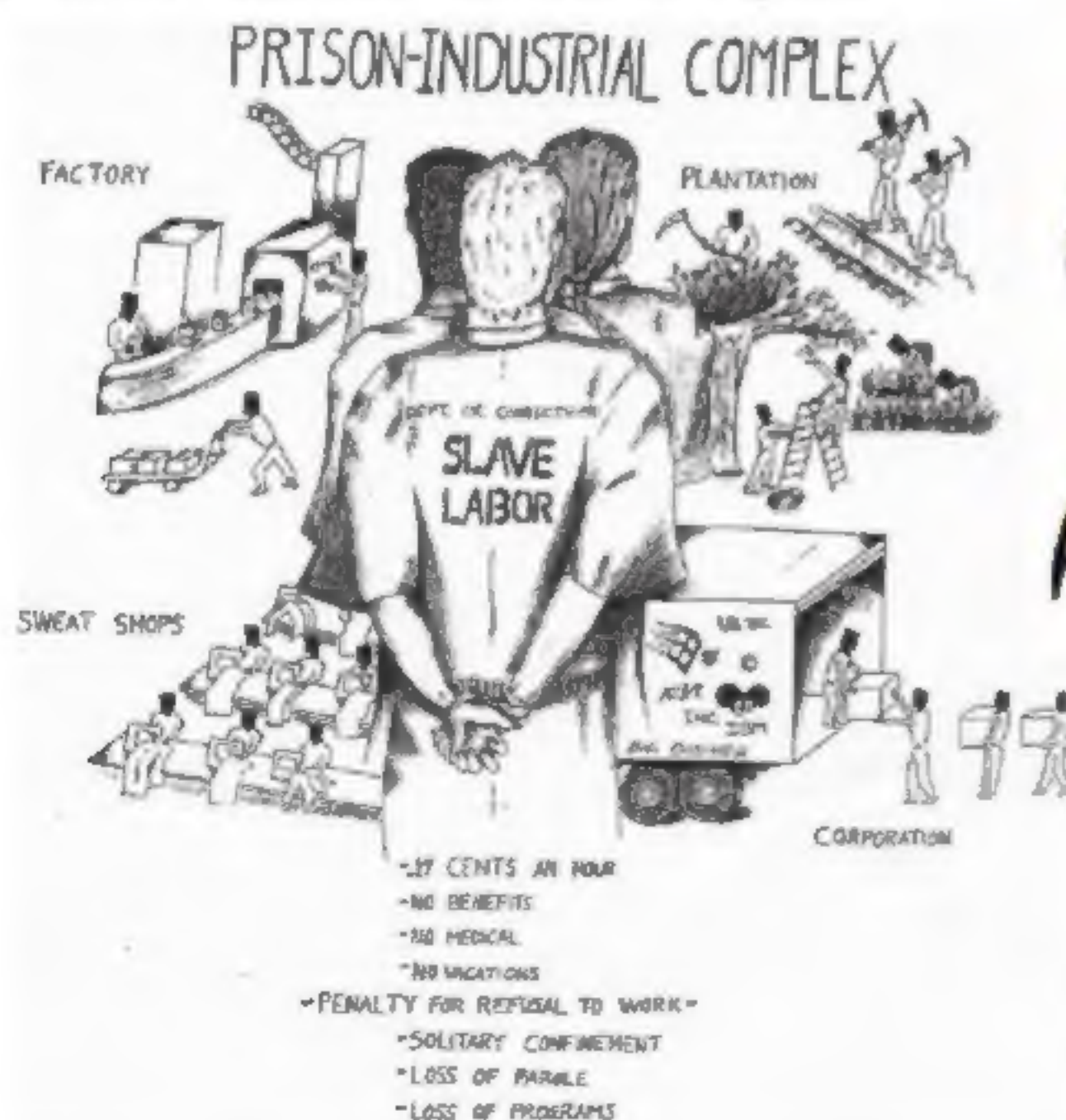
The University of Oregon is directly complicit in this system of exploitation — the intersection of the “Justice” system and a profit-driven economy. All of the University of Oregon’s dorm furniture — bunks, beds, closets, etc. — are built by people incarcerated at Oregon State Penitentiary (O.S.P.) in Salem. These prisoners are paid somewhere between 25 and 90 cents an hour, with skilled workers being paid slightly more. Prisoners are not allowed to unionize, strike, or bargain for better wages. It is likely that much more furniture on campus is built in O.S.P. but, as with much inter-institutional trade, it is difficult to know the extent to which these systems support one another. Further, it is likely that our university invests in many other prison industries and corporations through stocks, bonds, and other financial investments.

For some incarcerated folks, having a job in prison is very important and gives them a sense of pride. It gets prisoners out of their cells, distracts them from other realities of prison

life, and may even give them skills that they can use on the outside. Yet we still must question the role of labor in prisons, and look at the history of labor within prisons. I argue that prison labor may, in many cases, benefit prisoners in the short-term; however, this labor is part of a “reform” trend, which is primarily that of the expansion of prisons. As mentioned earlier, as long as prison labor is providing a profit-incentive for the continuation of incarceration, profiteers will lend financial and political support for a growing prison system. Thus, we see legislation such as Measure 11, mandatory minimum sentencing legislation in Oregon, receive much financial and political support from prison-industry leaders.

With our reality of university education being intertwined with the reality of exploited prison labor, what does it mean to attend this University and thereby profit from the exploitation of an incarcerated labor force? How does this shape our education, especially for those of us engaged in questions of social justice? Shall we remain complicit in creating a “sub-class” of humans?

I believe that we must challenge ourselves and our complicity in the prison-industrial-complex. At the very least, we must challenge what justice ought to look like, and as we go to sleep at night (perhaps on prisoner-built beds), we must examine the ways in which we benefit from a dehumanized “Justice” system. I believe that in order to contest the existence of the prison-industrial-complex, we must eliminate our complicity in it, and thus we must demand that we remove our investments — both personal and financial — from the unjust prison industry.



by Joel DeVildere



We sat down to chat with activist Adam Carpinelli, the Northwest Regional Organizer for the Jericho movement for political prisoner amnesty and co-founder of the Portland-based chapter, Oregon Jericho.

Student Insurgent: So how long have you been working with Jericho?

Adam: I've been specifically working with the Jericho movement since about 2005. That experience was shaped by, for the first time in my life, actually visiting someone in prison who was also a political prisoner. So, first time really visiting someone in prison, and also even meeting someone who was a political prisoner. Before that, I was familiar with the idea of political prisoners, and there were US-held political prisoners within our domestic boundaries that the government had kind of denied the existence of...

Before that, you know, people had political prisoner letter writing nights, and I was familiar with that on some level. But it wasn't something I had a deep consciousness about, per se.

SI: What sort of student advocacy groups have you been involved with before Jericho?

Adam: When I was at Portland State university doing my undergrad, we had a radical student group, which still exists at Portland State, which is called Students for Unity. Also, doing work at the campus radio station, which is not a political organization per se, but very lefty leaning, very connected to certain politics and counterculture...

Also in my undergrad, I took all my courses in Black Studies; also in the academic side of it I started to do more consciousness-raising that way as well, being exposed to things like that.

SI: Can you explain the roots of Jericho?

Adam: The more immediate history is Jericho being kind of an organization... it initially came out of a call that was made by people who were citizens of the Republic of New Africa. Not only them, but some other people — including Jalil [Muntaqim] — other black Panther, black Liberation army folks, such as Safu Bukari... People like that were the ones who were making this call for a national march on Washington D.C. And this was made in the late '90's, and then crystallized into the actual march itself, which happened in 1998 in Washington D.C., and comprised of thousands and thousands of people marching on the mall in Washington, with at least seventy different organizational affiliations.

From there, people were saying, "Look, we need to institutionalize this a little bit more, and have some sort of infrastructure for doing this kind of political prisoner support." For example, if you talk to old folks from all the different old movements, political prisoner organizing was different. There wasn't one organization that kind of did that.

And it's still similar; there's several different networks that do political prisoner support for particular people. It was more fragmented. So, this was kind of a push to start to have some kind of unity around it. It doesn't mean that it's all there now...

SI: More specifically, what sort of services does Oregon Jericho offer the public and offer to prisoners?

Adam: The work that the Jericho movement does in general... is doing political prisoner support, going from kind of broad to kind of narrow.

First of all, even doing the work is a response to the fact that the US government denies the existence of political prisoners within domestic boundaries. They might talk about political prisoners in some other country or something, but not here; almost kind of assuming that there hasn't been dissent... which is really ironic because everybody's always heard of Leonard Peltier and Mumia. They're in the international spotlight. People have always known about them all over the world... It starts with that first iteration of even understanding this. And then, from there, expounding on what that actually means — What kind of political prisoners? What are they in prison for?

Then you have to understand something about all these different movements that we've had in the Americas for the past 500 years... really understanding this recent history of 500 years of colonization and slavery in the Americas, and how all these different movements have responded to it in different ways — whether they're native struggles, Black liberation struggles, White allies taking on anti-imperialist roles within that — like the Weather people, or just even people in the anti-nuclear movements, and so on and so forth...

That's where the name "Jericho" comes from. It's biblical; we're not a religious organization, but it's a biblical reference. In the book of Joshua, they talk about breaking down the walls of Jericho, blowing the horns, raising the clamor to break down these oppressive walls. So, in that way, it's that kind of consciousness-raising about that kind of work, raising that clamor, and having people speak out...



Summer 2012 Political Prisoner Letter Writing Nights

That's part of that work too, is organizing all kinds of different events. Some of them are big political rallies, like we had the Peltier march in Tacoma... It was the Native people, AIM people (which is the American Indian movement), people from Leonard Peltier Offense-Defense Committee are making this call, we work very much in solidarity with that...

On the basic level is doing the on-the-ground support. One way is by having these political prisoner letter-writing nights, that people can come and get familiar with this discourse... Another part of it is how do you write to someone in prison?—There's certain things that you can't do, and that you shouldn't do, writing to someone in prison — creating that kind of literature to have for people. Then when they come in, they don't feel alienated.

It's about supporting these political prisoners. Once you visit a political prisoner, or anybody in prison, you learn about their struggles. Two particular tiers of that has to do with legal support and medical support. These are the kind of things that we fund-raise for. So, when I talk about putting on events, part of that has to do with how are we going to raise money to get some of these lawyers to help out with some of these cases. How do we get medical support? ...Medical stuff is expensive—they get treated so bad in prison. A lot of these folks now are getting pretty old, at least for the older BP's and POW's. These people have been in for like thirty, forty years. They're getting sick. Maybe they have cancer. Some of them have died in prison...

We have a connection for 501c3 that we can use, but that's not the big thing of the whole work that we do... It's about supporting these people.

Join your community allies while building cross-movement solidarity by learning about, writing to and supporting domestic and international Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War. All materials are provided as well as tutorials for those who have not written to people in prison.

Co-sponsored by: Portland Books to Prisoners, Oregon Jericho, NW Jericho Coalition, Portland Animal Defense League, Cascadia Earth First, Portland Anarchist Black Cross, Civil Liberties Defense Center, Portland Central America Solidarity Committee

—
Wednesday July 11th 7-9pm
Black Cat Cafe
3990 N Interstate Ave
Portland, OR 97227

—
Tuesday July 31st 7-9pm
Red & Black Cafe
400 SE 12th Avenue
Portland, OR 97214

—
Tuesday August 28th 7-9pm
Red & Black Cafe
400 SE 12th Avenue
Portland, OR 97214

—
Wednesday August 8th 7-9pm
Laughing Horse Books
12 NE 10th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232

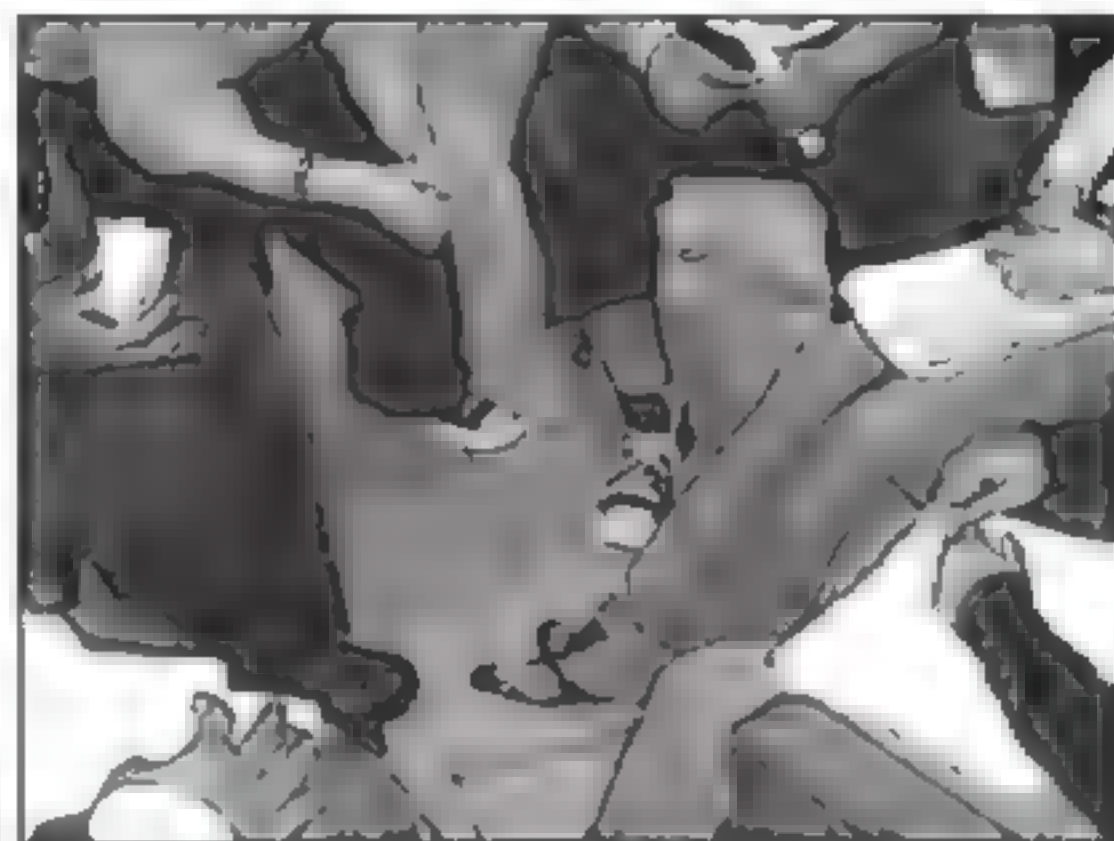
Reflections on [THE INSIDE-OUT PROGRAM]



The Inside-Out Program is a semester-long academic course, meeting once a week, through which 15 to 18 "outside" (i.e. undergraduate) students and the same number of "inside" (i.e.: incarcerated) students attend class together inside prison. All participants read a variety of texts and write several papers; during class sessions, students discuss issues in small and large groups.

Inside-Out is an opportunity for college students to go behind the walls to reconsider what they have come to know about crime and justice. At the same time, it is also an opportunity for those inside prison to place their life experiences in a larger framework. Inside-Out creates a paradigm shift for participants, encouraging transformation and change agency in individuals and, in so doing, serves as an engine for social change.

- insideoutcenter.org



My name is Francisco, and I am a prisoner at the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem. I am taking an Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program class with the University of Oregon. The class is about the Northern Ireland Conflict.

The most prominent aspect of the Catholics and Protestants in Ireland is the deep division between them. The Northern Irish are divided and segregated in every aspect of social life. Their past has been one of conflict and animosity that bitterly divides them on issues like memorials for those killed during "The Troubles," or even on the issue if people should have the right to the truth about past loss or the right to remember the conflict. These issues, like many others, are used as a political tool to attack the other side and point the finger and say "Look what you did to us."

I have found many parallels to the division in Northern Ireland and those in our society and country. Being in prison I see divisions here everyday. We divide and segregate ourselves by race, status, values, and beliefs. It seems that people just look for differences to separate themselves from others.

Society also separates itself from me, the prisoner. Society says that I do not deserve an education, a place to live, a place to work, or the right to vote. So where is my place in society? How can a whole population be ostracized? We are categorized as criminals forever. Society says that we have no real value.

The Inside-Out Program is a radical idea in the fact that it places value to people in prison and the knowledge we possess. Inside-Out, though it may do it unintentionally, says to our society that these people can be educated and do

have something to contribute. That, in itself, is radical. We need more people who are motivated for radical social change — people who have a dream and passion to climb that huge mountain of injustice and to see people as something more than just a label. Maybe we can start to give people a second chance and to see that maybe we all are not so different. Maybe the differences are only in the myth of being better than the next person.

Society sees me as a criminal, but I know that I am not a criminal anymore. I know that people are not defined by one act for the rest of their lives. People can have transformation in the values, beliefs and how they view society, as well as the world around them. People have the ability to change. I see that I can have a positive impact on society, and that I have a responsibility to do that.

So I think that people of Northern Ireland should not continue to define one another by what has happened in the past. Maybe we can all try to understand that people can change and find the will to forgive each other, if not for the other than at least for ourselves. I have heard it said that resentment is like ingesting poison and hoping that it kills the other person. How long can society continue to ingest that poison? There are people in prison who have changed and want to make a difference in the world around them for the better. Now, should society not stop ingesting that poison of resentment against prisoners and instead ask how to help prisoners in their transformation?

If this idea inspires you, look into the Inside-Out program and take a class. It will change your life as it has changed mine.

"When we realize that the people on the 'other side' are just like the people on our side, our actions towards them must change."

My name is Thomas, and I am one of the University of Oregon students that make the 'outside' part of the Inside-Out Program. Each week we pass through the walls, the bars, and the heavy doors of the Oregon State Penitentiary with little risk. To us, mobility is commonplace, and the walls of the prison institution are permeable. We enter the prisons not to spectate, give charity, nor educate, but as students on an equal footing with our 'inside' peers. We are an amazingly diverse groups of students, but the division is clear: they (insiders) wear blue, and we (outsiders) will leave the institution shortly after class; for them it may be years until they are released, or they may be in prison for life.

I believe that those of us who have the privilege to cross the societal or geographical walls that alienate one population from another must use this privilege to take the story of the 'inside' out, and the story of the 'outside' in. This role is important in any conflict or divide, such as the conflict in Northern Ireland, Israel-Palestine, the U.S.-Mexico border, or even within our neighborhoods and in prison. Those with the power of mobility have the ability to communicate honest messages from one side to another — messages that are often otherwise distorted by media and government officials. The message is simple: "the other" is human, too.

When we realize that the people on the "other side" are just like the people on our side, our actions towards them must change. In the Inside-Out program, we do not meet criminals, murderers, thieves, etc., for these labels do not translate onto humans, they only fit into our idea of "evil." I have met several people in the Inside-Out program who have murdered; however, instead of feeling fear or hate for these people, I feel the incredible sensation that these are humans with needs — people who seek forgiveness, and who want to find happiness. I am also humbled by the realization that I am no more human and no more just than this other person; instead, I understand

that I could very well be, with life's quick turns and unusual circumstances, one day living in this prison. I, too, am human. I, too, may cause others to suffer. I have no right to judge those who are locked behind the wall.

We must realize that walls do not provide justice or administer peace, but instead prolong the pain of conflict and suffering for both victims and perpetrators alike. Walls do not keep the other out, but they do make the "other" inhuman and unacceptable. Walls do not keep "aliens" away, but they instead create the strange alien that we are supposed to despise.

When we have the ability to pass through walls and see the other, walls become nothing more than bad ideas. They are obsolete, and they are ineffective. They solve no conflict, and they heal no wounds.

When class ends today, I will have the privilege to leave prison and go home. There are millions of incarcerated and otherwise "walled" people in the world who will not make it home for a very long time. Let us see their humanity, and pray for them so that they may someday be treated with respect that every human deserves.

Angela Davis on the prison-industrial-complex (MP3):

http://ia600300.us.archive.org/19/items/Angela_Davis_-_Prison_Industrial_Complex/Angela_Davis_-_Prison_Industrial_Complex.mp3



WE'RE ALL INSIDE THE FENCES

The Reproduction of Prison Inside Our Heads

By Rand W. Gould

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear
- William Blake, "London"

"It's all in your head, man." How many times have we heard that before? I'm bettin' plenty and it's truer than one might suspect. Why? Because the blueprint for the system of our oppression — state, religion, politics and civilization — is inside our heads, where if we're not careful, and sometimes, even if we are, it's constantly being reproduced. Prison is truly in our heads.

From the day we are born, we're all inside the fences and subject to civilization's unrelenting domestication project. Remember your crib? Not much different from jail, only the bars were wooden and not steel. Same for our playpens. How fucked up is that? Starting life off in a playpen, and in the case of many of us, winding up in a state pen.

the dream sea has been poisoned,
the stop light splashes me red
innocence suffocated in its sleep,
- Acid Bath, "Dr. Seuss is Dead"

Our domestication begins when we leave the womb and continues, with the mostly unwitting assistance of our parents, right on up through adolescence and beyond. As we grow older we're confronted with an ever-expanding series of physical boundaries or limits — the backyard fence, the block, the freeway, the town or city, state and nation. All of which assist in the erection of mental fences where there are no physical ones — the so-called taboos. Especially forbidden is sexual play and experimentation on our own or with other children. As children, we've all played doctor, our curiosity being innate, and we've all caught hell when caught doing it!

I have no name
I am but two days old.
What shall I call thee?
I happy am
Joy is my name
- William Blake, "Infant Joy"

Then, of course, there's school and religion, those purveyors of dogmatism, lies and peer pressure that we all know so well. Blake was right to call school "the great Sin," but the social engineers proved him wrong for saying, "There is no use in education." The state puts education — the social coercion of school and religion — to use by having teachers and preachers beat our innate joy right out of us in a veritable frenzy of domestication.

Anytime I want
I got a right to move,
no matter what they say.
- Iggy Pop, "I've Got a Right"

In civilization's social engineering project, the tamer we are the more room we have to move. The less amenable to the project, the less room to move. The wild ones find themselves pushed into an ever-decreasing series of spaces — jails, prisons, mental hospitals, etc. — by the authorities known as teachers, preachers, police, lawyers, judges, politicians, etc. In two words — the parasites. And inside of these spaces, these prisons, there is yet another administrative segregation (Ad-Seg), communication management units (CMU), secure housing units (SHU), etc. All of them the gut-wrenching, mind-shredding, soul-killing instruments of domestication.

You don't play along, and the parasites will put you in here; Inside a system where more than ever the law is to be obeyed but not followed. A prison where the convicted are just as likely to be innocent as to be guilty. Unknown to most on the outside, once arrested and charged you will never be considered innocent. The best you can hope for is a finding of "not guilty" and if you were to sue for, say, false arrest or malicious prosecution, the courts will quickly disabuse you of any thinking that "not guilty" means you're innocent.

Justice, dignity, nobility, freedom... these words that yap and howl, are they anything other than household pets whose masters have calmly awaited their homecoming since the time when heroic lackeys won the right to walk them on the streets?
- Raul Vaneigem

Our much-vaunted constitutional rights, which at best were an illusion, along with "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," have steadily been stripped away. For example, the Fourth Amendment states no searches or seizures are to be conducted without a warrant issued by a court upon a showing of probable cause. Nevertheless, this has somehow been reinterpreted by the courts to mean the suspicion of any armed parasite (i.e., law enforcement officer) allows searches and seizures. All that's left of the Bill of Rights is the Third Amendment, as they're not quartering soldiers in our homes — yet!

The passage of the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA) gutted the Writ of Habeas Corpus, i.e., the Great Writ, along with 800 years of case-law precedent and Article I, Section 9, clause 2 of the United

Everyone sleeps here in a single grave.
- *The Cocktail Furies*, "The Swelling of Leeches"

In men's prisons the pacifiers range from cable TV and organized sports to the female guards that George Jackson so correctly assessed as extremely dangerous. Some prisoners are so docile that they don't want to leave, and would just as soon stay in their cells and rot. The gun-towers, chase-cars and fences could all be removed and very few few would walk away, except maybe the prisoners at the highest security levels.

When prisoners aren't laid-up in their bunks watching TV and eating a bowl of Ramen noodles or a bag of chips, they're down on base playing cards or kickin' it with some guard, usually female, spilling the beans about all and sundry. Like

"From the day we are born, we're all inside the fences and subject to civilization's unrelenting domestication project."

States Constitution. This means that once you're convicted you're likely to stay convicted, no matter what new evidence you discover or what rules or laws the courts, prosecutors, police, and your lawyers have broken. Yes, "your" lawyers, who are officers of the court, so guess where their allegiance lies?

Then there's the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1996 (PLRA), where the so-called "reforms" make it nearly impossible to pursue a lawsuit for any violations of your personal, human, or constitutional rights. For example, if a prison doctor prescribes the wrong medication but it doesn't result in an immediate and serious injury, you're left without a remedy. The potential for future harm doesn't matter. There's a lot more to it, but suffice to say the PLRA gives our jailers — the parasites — carte blanche to torture us.

But the oppression of law is the least of it, because it's so obvious. Although, many prisoners wind up domesticated, insane, or both in their pursuit of perceived but non-existent legal remedies. The real danger is the shit in our heads and insidious methods our jailers use to reinforce and add to it. Modern prisons act like monstrous pacifiers, while simultaneously training its victims to be servile members of civilized society.

Pavlovian zombies they gather three times a day, waiting 30 minutes or more for chow to be called so they can run to the chowlines and stand in them for another 10 or 15 minutes in order to eat. They'll complain like crazy about how short yard-time is, yet automatically walk off the yard when it gets close to the normal closing time, regardless if it's been closed or not.

The programs, as in "domestication" programming, are even more insidious, from substance abuse, assaultive and sexual offender therapy to building trades, food tech, etc. All crap the jailers pound into your head in order to force your acceptance of their nightmare world, where nobody bats an eye as predator drones reduce whole villages to ashes in Asia and Africa — preferably women and children first, all in the name of civilization.

My own mind is my own church
- Thomas Paine, "Age of Reason"

Of course, there's school and religion in prison. Hell, these damn joints are littered with Bibles and Korans, even L. Ron Hubbard's ravings! Right from jump, a close friend warned me, "You better be careful 'cause god is creepin' all around those joints." It seems a mutual friend went to jail and found christ, and she wasn't talking about Alexander the Great. You

cannot walk the yard without seeing scores of victims of the desert death-cult religions clutching their holy books, while preying on the young kids that come through the bubble. Disgusting, but not surprising, when their holy books are little more than paeans to predation and slaughter.

**You don't get made a victim,
you have to make yourself a victim.**
- Brigitte Mohnhaupt, RAF member,
quoted by Stefan Aust, *Baader-Meinhof*

It's a head game and the jailers' maximum effort is devoted to creating a condition commonly called "Stockholm Syndrome." I wish, because we'd be living in a very different world if the Red Army Faction (RAF) of Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof has anything to do with it. The April 1975 RAF attack on the German embassy in Stockholm, Sweden, resulted in the hostages being released, walking out and declaring that the RAF was right in trying to overthrow the German predator state and the rest of the states in Europe! Although, I suppose, as Marxists they would've replaced the capitalist state with their "dictatorship of the proletariat." Another, albeit different, blueprint of oppression.

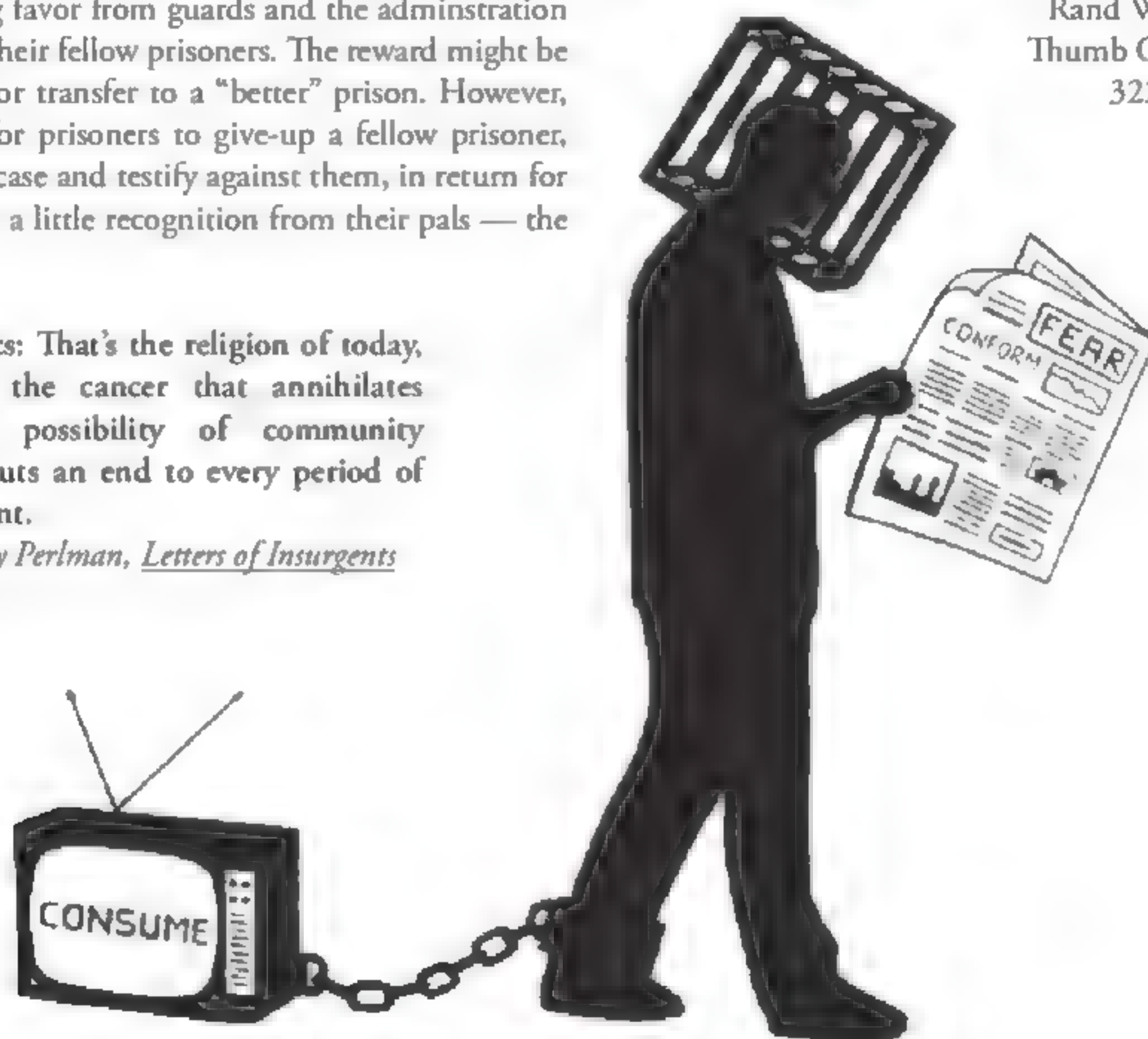
Inside prison, "Stockholm Syndrome" is manifested in prisoners currying favor from guards and the administration by snitching out their fellow prisoners. The reward might be sez with a guard or transfer to a "better" prison. However, it's not unusual for prisoners to give-up a fellow prisoner, even give them a case and testify against them, in return for nothing more but a little recognition from their pals — the guards!

**Politics: That's the religion of today,
that's the cancer that annihilates
every possibility of community
and puts an end to every period of
ferment.**
- Fredy Perlman, *Letters of Insurgents*

But, it isn't just inside prisons where this is going down. We're all witnessing how Occupy Wall Street and the leaderless movement it engendered is being attacked and destroyed from without by armed goons and parasites known as police, while simultaneously being attacked from within by the advocates for leaders. And not just by the avowed statists, either, whose various political parties offer up a plethora of ready-made leaders, but even, however inadvertently, by Berkeley's *Slingshot*, where the Hella Occupy Edition 2011 articles, "Solidarity not Unity," quoted Slavoj Žižek as asking, "What type of new leaders do we need?" Huh!? The cry for leaders, the very antithesis of anarchy, is ubiquitous and will continue to be reproduced so long as the blueprint for oppression, Blake's "mind-forg'd manacles," remains in our heads!

Consequently, our survival depends on getting out of our heads and into our bodies. It's time to quit consuming all the spectacular bullshit and start living — quit school, work, watching TV, texting, sitting at a keyboard and monitor, driving cars, all political parties, and worshipping patriarchy and hypocrosy in temples, churches, mosques, and synagogues. Pull down the temples, run wild in the streets, tear them up, and sow a garden of your own desires!

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SYSTEMATIC TORTURE IN CALIFORNIA PRISONS

I am one of over 400 California prisoners involved in a petition to the U.N. and other courts. We are collectively working to put an end to the long-term isolation and other various torture practices that the California Department of Corrections (CDCR) has been using for behavior modification. We have stories of prisoners being isolated for over 30 years. I personally have been in secure housing unit (SHU) for more than 12 years. Although the years and effects vary from prisoner to prisoner, the story and plight is all the same.

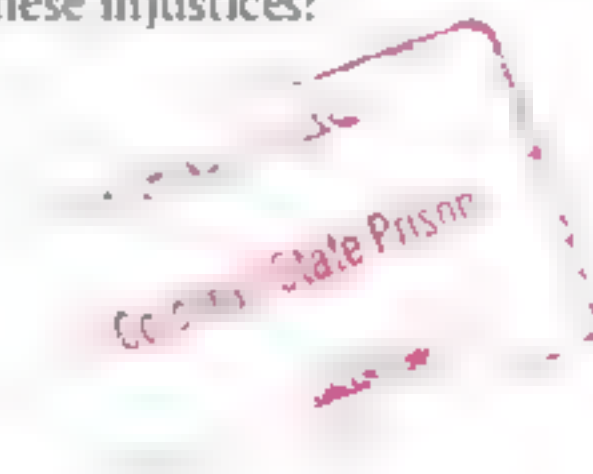
First, we are confined 22 1/2 hours a day, often longer. The officers have air conditioning, we have a swamp cooler that is inadequate at best, if it works at all. So we have no escape from the kiln-like effect of the concrete cells. The light is on all day long, and we are denied or limited privileges as if we have broken some institutional rules. These are just a few of the sufferings here at Corcoran SHU. The worst is Pelican Bay SHU, which has no windows, sunlight, or cell partners. The CDCR justifies these acts of torture by claiming the prisoner is a "confirmed" prison gang member or associate. Once CDCR determines you are a "validated" gang member, you are then sent to one of the four SHU housing facilities. The purpose of this confinement is to restrict any "gang" activity, and if an inmate is found to refrain from any "activity" for a period of six years, he can be released back into general population. Sounds like a reasonable set-up.

In reality, the cover "validates" anyone for fabricated reasons because there is no due process where an inmate can refute the allegations. Then, they put you with other validated inmates — and who do you have to associate with but your neighbor? So they can easily fabricate or manipulate things to make it seem as though you are involved in "activity." The term "activity" is not defined enough to limit CDCR abuse of the term. Lastly, if an

inmate is involved in some form of activity, their placement in SHU was designed to deter future activity. So how can an inmate be "active" for 30 years? It can only mean that the system does not have the desired effect, and is only continued for torturous effects.

In reality, prison is divided into "good" (general population) and "bad" (protective custody). And CDCR removes certain inmates and uses these tactics to get them to renounce / tell / debrief on some group or person-of-interest. For those with no belief system, that's fine. But for the rest of us, we shouldn't have to give up information to be treated equally. The government cannot say we are wrong, because they expect the same from their employees — a person found guilty of defecting is subject to the death penalty. That's Federal law

The moral is, we are being punished, repeatedly and severely, for no reason. We have not broken any laws or CDCR rules and regulations. We are the best-behaved inmates — most haven't received a "write-up" in over 10 years. Yet, in 2009, CDCR got a senate bill passed (SB xxx18) which states that once you're "validated" you must serve 100% of your sentence — the newest torture. Why do the inmates who are disciplinary-free have to suffer these injustices?



Thanks for the platform,

Respectfully
Richard Silvia

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The Pelican Bay Hunger Strike

By Cimmeron Gillespie

On July 1st, 2011, prisoners in California began a hunger strike to protest against the inhumane and torturous conditions that they face inside Security Housing Units. After three weeks, they called off the strike when the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation announced they would make changes.

Prisoners at Pelican Bay, as well as numerous prisons around California, resumed hunger striking on September 26, 2011 because the CDCR has not adequately addressed their five core demands regarding conditions in SHUs. At one point, hundreds continue to strike, affecting at least 12,000 prisoners in 13 prisons. The CDCR chose to meet the prisoners' peaceful resistance with retaliation, by barring family and legal visits, issuing disciplinary measures and using sensory deprivation techniques such as turning on the air conditioning and withholding medications and water in an effort to break the strike."

One prisoner stated, "People would rather die than continue living under their current conditions... It is a privilege, an honor to be a part of the struggle, to be a part of history for the betterment of all those inside these cement walls... I will go as far as my body allows me to go."

The Outline of Prisoner Demands:

1. End Group Punishment & Administrative Abuse
2. Abolish the Debriefing Policy, and Modify Active/Inactive Gang Status Criteria – (snitching)
3. Comply with the US Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons 2006 Recommendations Regarding an End to Long-Term Solitary Confinement
4. Provide Adequate and Nutritious Food
5. Expand and Provide Constructive Programming and Privileges for Indefinite SHU Status Inmates.

For a full list of demands and details see:

<http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com/the-prisoners-demands-2/>

In addition to fighting for basic treatment as humans, those incarcerated endure manual working conditions which seldom pay better than 15 cents an hour. Exploited prison labor is the motivation for the prison guards union and the prison-industrial-complex, which supports the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC - a conservative lobby which produces a quarter of all legislation passed in the US). ALEC created Arizona's SB1070, the racist law which encourages racial profiling, detainment and arrest of any person of color in order to "catch" unrecognized workers. The prison industry supports this legislation because prisons are paid per prisoner, and more prisoners means a steady work force. The wages (mentioned above) are a pittance necessary to afford only basic clothes and hygiene products. Prison labor

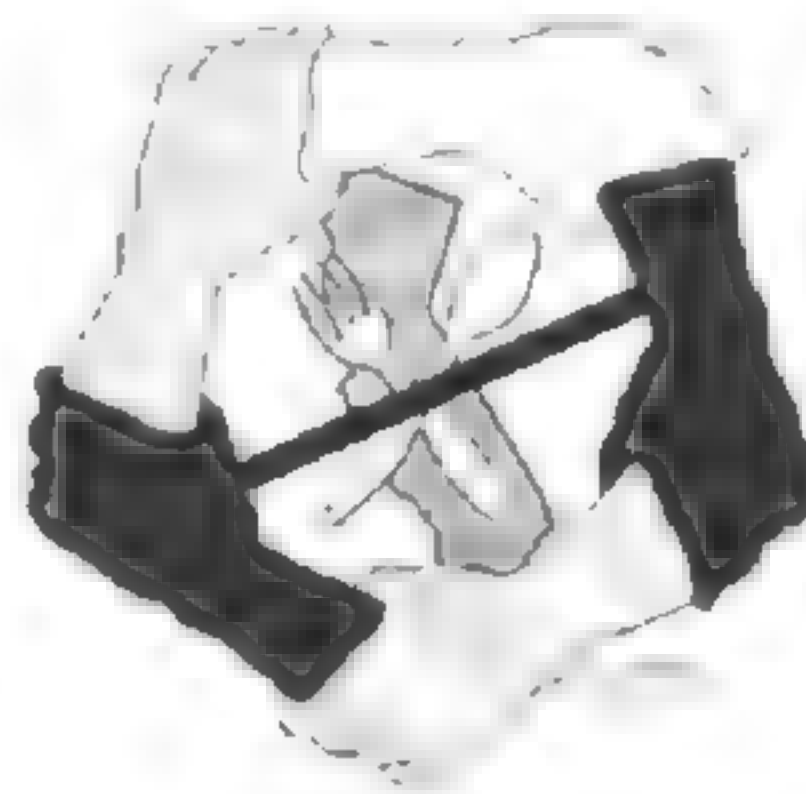
is not quite as bad as chattel slavery, because workers can choose not to work (albeit with certain penalties), but it is worse than indentured servitude because one cannot work towards one's freedom. Prison workers cannot leave, cannot easily change their jobs, and essentially have to work to acquire even basic needs. Even slave owners in the South often provided a shack, rags, and gruel.

While prisoners risk their lives simply being inside, this must compel us on the outside to take on the ability to respond within our communities. The conditions of prisons should teach every person on the outside to learn to deal with problems in our communities without calling the police or involving the 'justice' system. While prisoners cry out for reform, radical communities must seek to find effective alternatives to the entire prison system. By not relying on state repression, we free ourselves. It is necessary to abolish the whole prison system -- a system which creates conditions such as these and which continues to perpetuate and rationalize its own existence. Abolish the prison industrial complex, free all political prisoners, and build community justice!



For more info, visit:

<http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com/2011/10/13/hunger-strikers-at-pelican-bay-end-strike-after-nearly-3-weeks-strike-continues-at-other-prisons/>



**support
the pelican bay
hunger strike**

The Musings (or Mental Fog) of a Hunger Striker

by Gabriel A. Huerta

Sitting here on my 17th day of a hunger strike, in protest of the inhumane and torturous treatment of our confinement in the SHU of Pelican Bay State Prison, my heart races at 126 beats per minute — at rest! Am I soon going to have a heart attack? Am I mad for risking my health — my life! — or am I just “fed up” with having spent 25 years of my life in SHU for non-disciplinary reasons?

My mind is racing just as fast, if not faster, as my heart. A fog has settled in on my thoughts; everything seems hazy and I’m not sure if I’m even thinking logical anymore.

This morning I was dozing in and out of a dream. I usually don’t remember my dreams anymore, so I’m not even sure if I was actually dreaming or if I was awake and just thinking in the fog. But this is what I remember:

I was in this big ‘ol boat, along with a whole lot of other guys, and we were rowing this boat. It was hard work (and maybe that’s what got my heart pumping so hard!), and if any of us slowed down or fell out of sync, these overseers would come over and whip us something awful, so all had an incentive to keep rowing.

Then an old man, a few rows in front of me, stopped rowing. He started to sway, from side to side, as the overseers whipped him. Regardless of the pain, the old man just continued to sway, from side to side, from side to side, all he would say is “rock.” Everyone thought the guy was mad, that he had lost his mind or something. Then another guy, a few rows back, threw his oar down and began to sway in the same way as the old man. Everyone was confused. Then a few more people started throwing down their oars and swaying in sync to each other. Nothing was said except “Rock!” The boat started to sway, just a little, from side to side, and the overseers were frantic to stop the swaying. They were whipping guys viciously, but no one would pick up the oars. In fact, more and more people were refusing to row and the boat was rocking dangerously close to capsizing. The overseers were terrified and all that was heard was “Rock!” “Rock!”

The oars, with the words “Industries,” “shirt factory,” “wood products,” “shoe factory,” “dairy,” “kitchen workers,” and “cooks” engraved into them, were all just laying there, idle, and we told the overseers, “You want this boat rowed, then you do the rowing!”

About this time, I either woke up or I snapped out of the fog I was in. My heart was racing. Am I mad? Is that really such a crazy, irrational thought? Or is it the most sanest, common sense thing that should have taken place years ago?

I thought about this as I drank my tea and the correctional officer passed out breakfast. “Are you gonna eat?” the C.O. asked. “No,” I replied. And with my heart still racing I thought to myself, crazy or not, I say “let’s rock!”

From the heart,
Gabriel A. Huerta
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PO Box 7500
Crescent City, CA 95532



The Moon through the bars

Suppose you took a moment away from your busy, hectic, humdrum life and looked up.
 Looked up to admire the heavens which maybe you don't remember.
 The last time you stopped to consider and beheld the beauty.
 Suppose you liked what you saw and imagine you were someplace
 Where the manmade lights continually drown out the splendor of the stars
 And you rarely saw the moon

Suppose you had no one to go home to and imagine...
 Imagine at this moment someone, somewhere in the dark, a stranger to you
 Is looking up at the same sky and trying not to cry.
 Suppose I am laying in the dark yet surrounded by floodlights
 And I'm looking up through a small gap in the window bars where I can see the moon
 Imagine I am thinking about you, a nameless, faceless stranger.
 Wondering if you are admiring the same moon and wishing I were there next to you.

The soft sound of the sprinkler in the C-block yard
 The quiet hum of the fan on the empty tier.
 A simple comfort to me.
 Suppose you could look through my eyes.
 If only for a moment.
 Feel what I feel and touch the hope that is in my heart.
 And suppose the next time you fix your eyes upon a star that maybe...
 Maybe you don't really know how blessed you are.
 And imagine from now on you wont just hurry on your way
 Without stopping to breath in, breath in and behold
 All the beauty and splendor around you. Suppose...



32810
 of a photo in a book. eaption
 states.
 " where Van Gogh died"
 (now restaurant)
 whole new meaning
 "life goes on"
 similar to prison
 "have you leaped yr lesson?"
 - John Tyson
 511885
 CSI

WALDO Ryan Homsley
 # 147267
 MCDC

(I)
 He looked and saw what he could see,
 A vast landscape of inter-he,
 So he went out on a trek,
 Not to return the same self he left,
 With no direction or a plan,
 He set out to make sense of the land,
 He tripped and fell down so deep,
 There he lie in a heap,
 He learned to think and he thought,
 What is and what's not,
 He learned of silence and what it holds,
 Secrets that were never told,
 A search for truth and a search for self,
 Where they collide and where they melt,
 Now he realized he was wrong,
 He never should have come all along,
 Pick and choose and you will lose,
 Life in it all its hues,
 Once alive now you're dead,
 To yourself you were fed,
 You know yourself or so you thought,
 Now you are what is not.
 - Timothy Arnold
 #25469
 Wyoming State Prison

ROAST BEEF [another declaration for reparation (\$)]

(part I) By Jaime Cotten, aka Jah-VI

DOC# 887694

Washington Corrections Center

BECAUSE WRONG IS THE NEW RIGHT.

BECAUSE LIFE REQUIRES A FIGHT.

BECAUSE A PHOENIX BIRD IN FLIGHT

IS A REMARKABLE, MONSTROUS

AND IMPOSING THING.

BECAUSE NATIONS GANGBANG,

AND MIGHT MAKES ALL THE RULES.

BECAUSE NATIONS GANGBANG,

AND MIGHT MAKES ALL THE RULES.

BECAUSE TRUE EDUCATION IS CRYPTANITE

TO A NEO-NAZI-ESQUE SUPER-POWER.

(ahem, north korea).

so while you're scootin' away from me

on the bus, most sex offenders don't

look like us.

while you lock me up,

and swallow the key --

I rise above, and still get free.

I cut the strings of the puppet master.

I laugh in the face of a beast disaster.

hideous chuckles, as if I know something

that you don't. some of ya'll get it.

most of ya'll won't.

there's beef, there's beef.

there's beef, there's beef.

[IN THE REFRIGERATOR]

ameriKKKa's refrigerator- is filled with elite KKKapitalist
a green grass box- of we the people tomb plots
with red clay- of a blood mutiny into civil war
brown dirt- of neo-KKKolonial plantations
and black mud-of KKKovered Afrikan Ancestry
a geo-polito-eKKKonomiKKKal space- KKKalled the united
snaKKKes

IN THE REFRIGERATOR

shelves- of hatred

of slave labor- pains mixed with atrocities

women without rights- clear as black and white

denial of civil liberties- promised in the KKKonstitution

deprivation of human rights- intended by the creator

IN THE REFRIGERATOR

ice cube containers- of anarchist trapped inside

of racism- beating spirits down

prejudice- ignoring universal truth

bigotry- that continues to scar the youth

ameriKKKa is a refrigerator chained up!

by Sehu-Kessa-Saa Tabansi

(Alfonso Percy Pew #BT-7263)

LORD, Let Me Fly!

-o- The mind of man -o-
-o- -o- -o- -o-

fear is created in the mind of man who explores such
things as he can't understand. He fears the nature that nurtured
the seeds of confusion and chaos in the life that he leads.

He lives in a treacherous world full of scandalous lies. His
dillusional mind create Illusional eyes. I am not mad I no
what I see, you say I'm on dope you criticize me. Is it the
Drugs that make me insane? or do I use dope to subdue the
Pain? The pain of knowing of this world in which we dwell
knowledge of corrupt leaders governing our hell. They feed
on our misery the grow on our fear. Please help us God for
the end draws near. yes the mind of man that rule our lives
is where demons lurk and evil thrives. They are masters of
destruction and devils of spawn, our souls are condemned our
freedom is gone. So follow your leaders to death and destruction
down a highway to hell leads there corruption. Power, Greed,
money and Death is there. Purpase you'll see, and to capture us
all and never set us free.....

♥ Kidfish

Danny Richards

#961242 - cedar 26

WCC

Po Box 400

Shelfon, WA 98584



WE'RE Plainly INSANE WE
RAISED UP IN PAIN AND WE WERE MAINLY
THE SYSTEM OF JUSTICE FOR CHILD ABUSERS WHO
Touched us And crushed the lives of our brothers who
and others becoming the minds of our mothers

EQUAL

WE'LL NEVER BE WHILE THESE EVIL
AMPHETAMINE PEOPLE BREED AND DRESS
UP LIKE POLICE DECEIVING YOU
STEALING YOUR FREEDOM
WHAT HAS BECOME OF US ARE WE DONE
OR ALL DUMB ENOUGH TO BE VOTING
FOR SOMEONE THAT WE DON'T KNOW
TO BE ONE OF US?

vampirefreaks.com/-BooMonster-

AND POETRY BY
ROMANY YVES MESINA
AKA PRISONED POET

PRISONER SUPPORT RESOURCES:*(NOTE: SOME INFO MAY BE OUT-OF DATE):*

EUGENE ABC ZINE DISTRO
 C/O ACE WOOKIE
 SUITE #1 E.M.U. - U OF O
 EUGENE, OR 97403
 (SOCIALUNLIMITED@GMAIL.COM)

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS FEDERATION
 WWW.ABCF.NET/
 (LA@ABCF.NET)

SOUTH CHICAGO ABC ZINE DISTRO
 PO BOX 721
 HOMewood, IL 60430

NW CHICAGO ABC ZINE DISTRO
 PO BOX 154
 FOX RIVER GROVE, IL 60021

AUSTIN ABC
 P.O. BOX 19733
 AUSTIN, TX 78760-9733

BOSTON ABC
 PO BOX 230182
 BOSTON MA 02123
 (BOSTONABC@RISEUP.NET)

DENVER ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS
 C/O P&L PRINTING
 2727 W. 27TH AVE UNIT D
 DENVER, CO 80211

HOUSTON ABC
 PO BOX 667614
 HOUSTON, TX 77266-7614

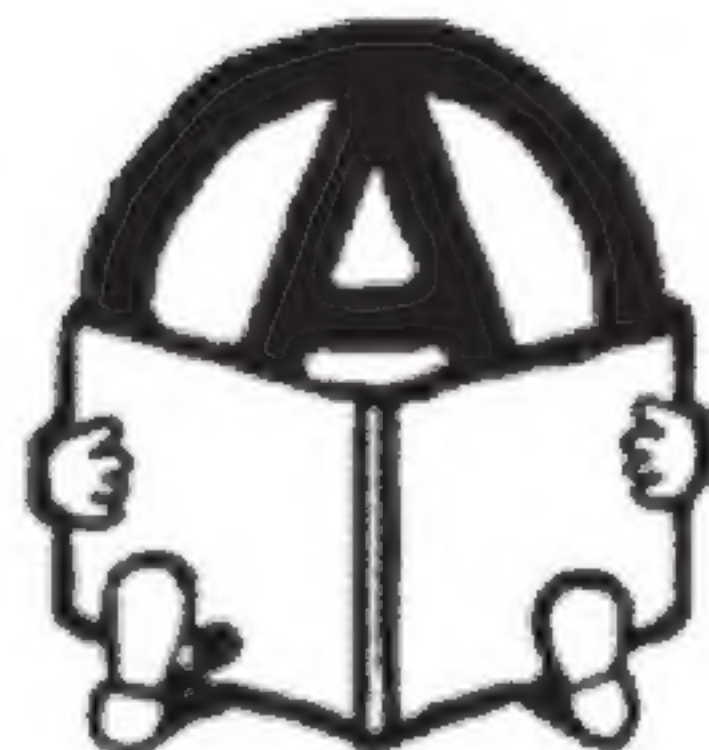
LAWRENCE ABC
 PO BOX 1483
 LAWRENCE, KS 66044

LOS ANGELES ABCF
 P.O. BOX 11223
 WHITTIER, CA 90603

NEW YORK CITY ABCF
 PO BOX 110034
 BROOKLYN, NY 11211

PHILADELPHIA ABCF
 PO BOX 42129
 PHILADELPHIA, PA 19101

RICHMOND ABC
 PO BOX 6025
 RICHMOND, VA 23222



BOOKS TO PRISONERS
 C/O LEFT BANK BOOKS
 92 PIKE ST. BOX A
 SEATTLE, WA 98101
 WWW.BOOKSTOPRISONERS.NET/
 WWW.PDXBOOKSTOPRISONERS.ORG/

OREGON JERICHO MOVEMENT
 PO BOX 17420
 PORTLAND, OR 97217
 WWW.OREGON-JERICO.ORG
 WWW.THEJERICHOMOVEMENT.COM
 (OREGON.JERICO@GMAIL.COM)

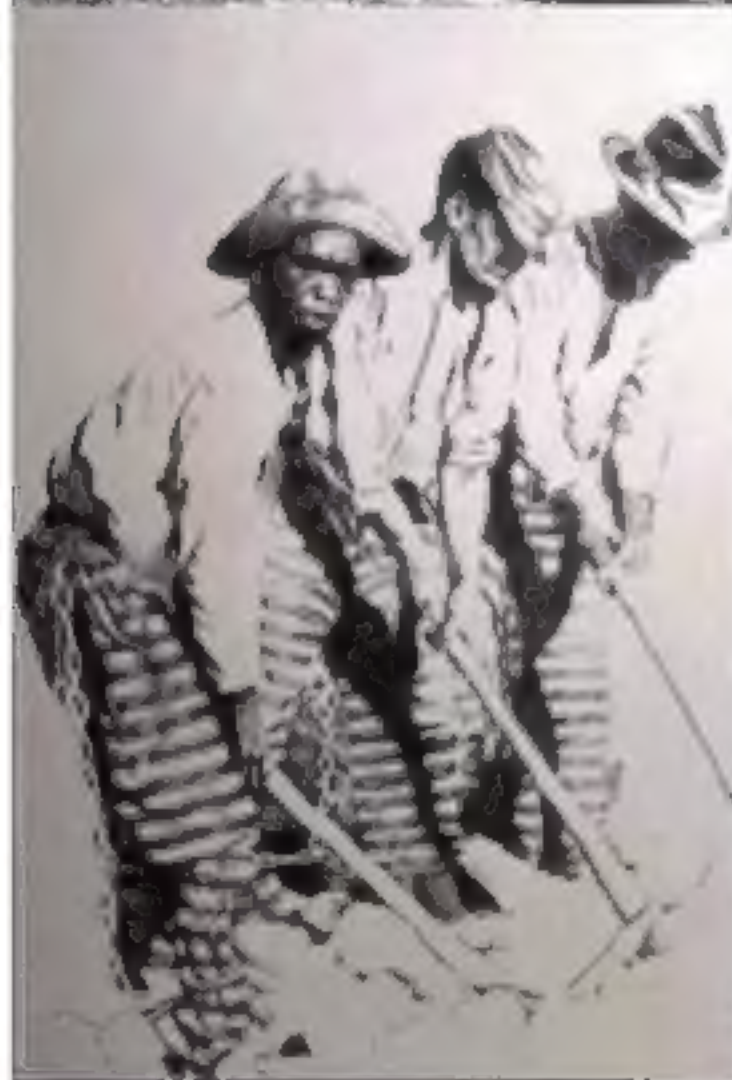
ANARCHIST PRISONER'S LEGAL AID NETWORK
 818 SW 3RD AVE. PMB #354
 PORTLAND, OR 97204

BREAK THE CHAINS
 HTTP://BREAKTHECHAINS.INFO/

Anarchist Black Cross

for the freedom of political prisoners





SLAVERY WAS NEVER ABOLISHED

Article XIII "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime... shall exist within the United States"

Abolish All Prisons
END the INJUSTICE

A Few Prison Facts:

Average cost to keep 1 person in jail for 1 year:

- Oregon: \$30,828
- North Carolina: \$26,000
- Michigan \$33,000
- Connecticut: \$44,115
- Rhode Island : \$45,000
- California: \$47,102
- New York: \$60,076
- average cost per inmate (of 40 surveyed states): \$31,307

- If even half of non-violent offenders were released, it would save US taxpayers \$17 billion per year

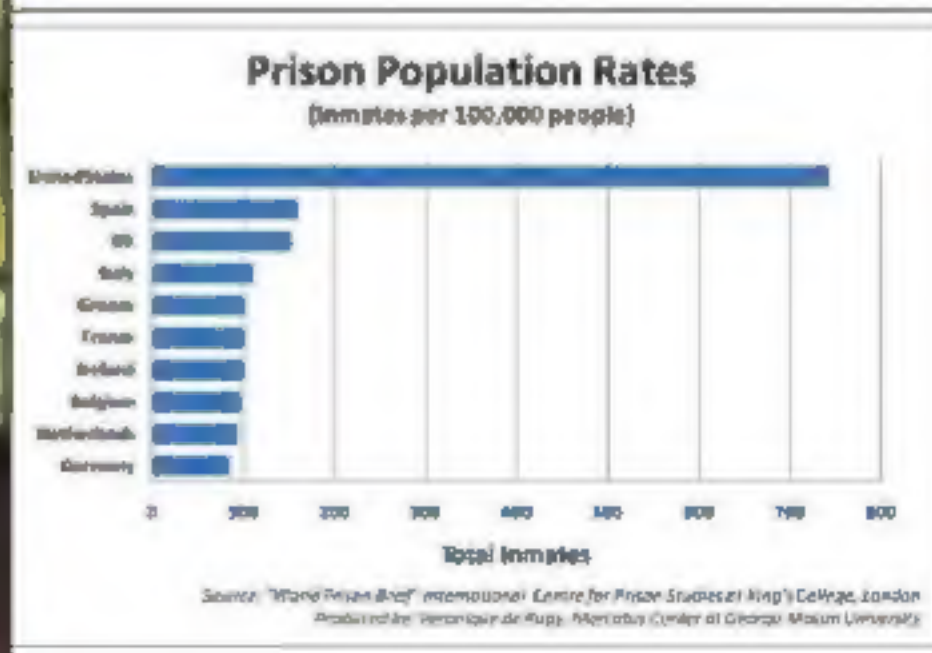
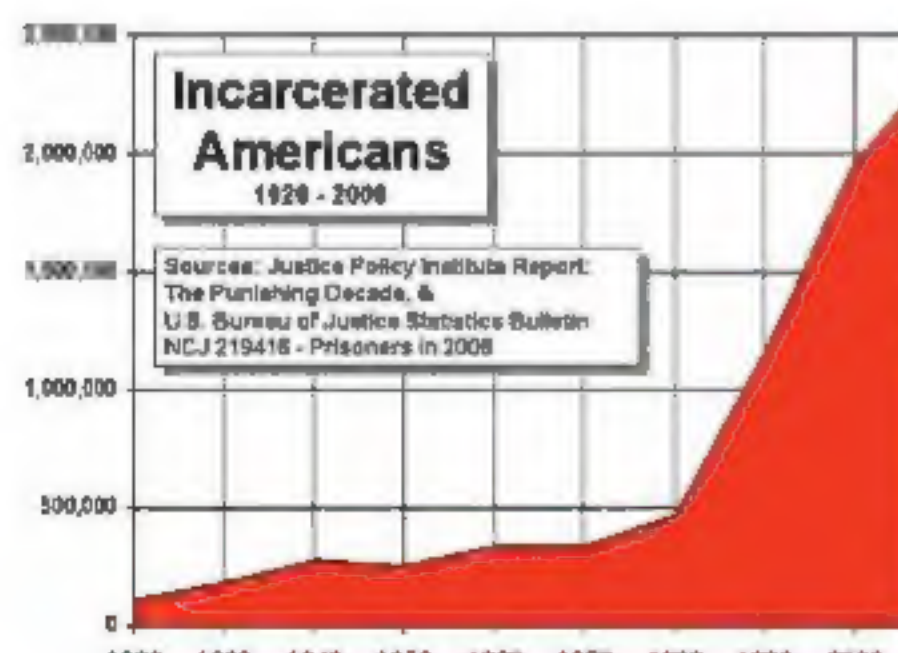
- US taxpayers spend \$2 billion per year to jail people for marijuana

- Measure 73, passed by voters in 2010, will cost Oregon an additional \$29 million per year within 5 years, primarily to jail drunk drivers

- According to official statistics, the USA imprisons more people than any other country in the world - More than Russia, more than China.

- 1 in every 18 males will be either imprisoned or monitored by the state during their lifetime.

(Source: Portland Books to Prisoners, Wikipedia, and VERA Institute of Justice)



Student Insurgent
1228 University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403



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BARS & STRIPES

THINK **FREELY.**